



Responding to bushfire risk: The need for transformative adaptation

Author(s): O'Neill SJ, Handmer J
Year: 2012
Journal: Environmental Research Letters : Erl. 7: 14018

Abstract:

The 2009 'Black Saturday' bushfires led to 172 civilian deaths, and were proclaimed as one of Australia's worst natural disasters. The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission was set up in the wake of the fires to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of each fatality. Here, results from an analysis undertaken for the Commission to examine the household preparedness policy 'Prepare, Stay and Defend, or Leave Early' ('Stay or Go'), plus an examination of the Commission's recommendations, are explored in the broader context of adaptation to bushfire. We find Victoria ill adapted to complex bushfire risk events like Black Saturday due to changing settlement patterns and the known vulnerabilities of populations living in fire prone areas, and increasingly in the future due to the influence of climate change extending fire seasons and their severity. We suggest that uncertainty needs to be better acknowledged and managed in fire risk situations, and that the responsibility for fire preparedness should be more justly distributed. We suggest that a transformation in adaptation is required to effectively manage complex bushfire risk events like Black Saturday, and provide four key ways in which transformation in bushfire preparedness could be achieved.

Source: Ask your librarian to help locate this item.

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Wildfires

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Impact:



specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Health Outcome Unspecified

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion, Review

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content